



# Winchelsea News

*All Individuals Matter*

## November Newsletter

I hope you have all had a good half term break and managed to find some time to enjoy some family activities together. This term would normally be packed with Christmas events and we are saddened by the prospect of not being able to entertain you with our usual Christmas plays but we are still hoping to have an enjoyable half term in our own class bubbles.

**With this letter you will find details of an interesting research project that our KS2 children have been invited to participate in. Parents will need to sign the consent form and return it by Friday November 6<sup>th</sup>. Without permission you child will not be able to take part.**

### Thank you

Thank you for your continued support with the arrangements that school has had put in place to try to manage the risks associated with Covid-19. The staggered drop-off and pick up timings are now routine and the organisation of the day in school and the hygiene routines have become embedded. The children have been great and are following the directives very well and so far we are pleased that school is managing so well.

Please could I ask that parents continue to try to arrive promptly at the designated times and also leave promptly to avoid congestion and to minimise the numbers waiting in close proximity. Miss Stewart and I open gates promptly with the hope that dispersal from the school grounds can be as quick as possible. Please be understanding that the gate will then close and if you are late you may have to wait and access the next opening time. As the weather deteriorates I am sure we will all want to be at the gates for as little time as possible! These timings are in place to minimise contact and keep everyone as safe as possible. The wearing of masks is also appreciated at this time to help reduce the possibility of virus transmission.

When we first re-opened school in September I sent out a risk assessment to all parents and promised that this would be reviewed at half term. This has now taken place and slight amendments have been made in light of a review of our practices and also guidance and changes in the expectations from government directives on a wider scale. There are no significant changes that greatly affect our work but should you wish to read it you can find it on our school website.

### Information about what would happen should we get a positive case in our school.

So far, Winchelsea has remained Covid- free, despite some children in our setting coming into contact with positive cases or living in a household where members have needed to isolate. However, despite all of our best efforts, we have to be prepared for the eventuality that we may be faced with the need to close a class bubble if a pupil or staff member becomes ill.

I thought it might be helpful to know what will happen and the plans we have in place to inform parents as quickly as possible. A test result for a pupil can be received by parents via email or text at any time of day or night. As soon as school becomes aware of this result, Miss Stewart, Mrs Rowlands and myself will make phone calls directly to parents of children in the class bubble of the affected child. This will need to be a brief phone call which will let you know that your child will either need collecting from school if this happens during the school day or inform you that your child should not attend school the next school day if this happens in the evening. As soon as is possible after that phone call you will receive a letter which outlines what will happen next and give you details of the length of period of necessary isolation as a result, the exact date when your child can return and how you can access home learning for your child whilst they are absent from school. Your child's class teacher will be in touch within 48 hours of bubble closure with further information. This will be dependent on the staff member's own health. If you have children in more than one class there is no need for all children to remain at home, only the one in the closed class bubble. This only changes if anyone in your household becomes symptomatic and seeks a test, in which case all family members should remain home in isolation until a test result is received.

I appreciate that this will cause heightened anxiety and worry for parents and children. Likewise this will be a stressful and worrying time for the staff at Winchelsea. Please be reassured that we will be doing everything we can to support you and your child but there is a great deal of work that will need to go on within school at very short notice including reporting to relevant agencies and following the guidance and protocols that they will dictate. I hope parents will be mindful of this pressure and only contact school if vitally necessary as phone lines will need to be kept as free as possible to deal with managing the immediate issues.

### Communication

As our risk assessment does not allow parents on site we know that this makes communication very difficult. If you have any concerns or questions please contact the office by telephone or via email. Please keep an eye on our website for information and follow me on Twitter @Winchelsea1 as these are the best methods of seeing the most up-to-date information. We are trying hard to keep you informed by direct email too so please make sure the office have your correct contact details. If school attaches a read receipt or asks for a reply it is vital that you help us by responding so that we know you have received the information. As you can appreciate, trying to keep in touch with over 200 of you is not an easy task!

## Harvest collections

Thank you to everyone who supported the harvest collections for the Methodist Church. I am sure that the Community Larder in Sleaford were very grateful for all the donations they received and that those people in the locality who benefit from this charitable organisation will really appreciate the help in these difficult times.



## Polite reminders

I would like to remind parents that dogs are not allowed within the perimeter of the school site and whilst they are never on our school playground I must point out that our perimeter includes the connecting path from Rectory Road to our zebra crossing. I appreciate that parents who own

dogs may have walked to school with them to drop off or collect their children at school and in most cases have them safely on a lead. However, there are some parents and children who feel uneasy especially when dogs are excitable or unpredictable. I ask that parents with dogs are mindful of this and that dogs remain clear of the school gates to the site at busy times. Similarly can I remind parents that smoking is also not permitted on our school site within the same boundaries.

Please could parents ensure that if someone else is coming to collect children, such as grandparents, other family members or friends they are aware of both of these restrictions but also know the procedures in regard to drop off and collection times, which gate to use and our appreciation of face coverings. This reduces any confusion for everyone.

## Parking and cars on the school site.

Parking has always been difficult around our school site, especially with the potential volume of cars that might access the through-road at any one given time. I would request that parents try to avoid bringing cars onto the school site. Winchelsea has always promoted walking, scooting or cycling to school by children where this can be done safely. St George's have asked me to request that parents do not park on their site or on the access road near their school as they also have concerns about congestion with buses and taxis and need to ensure the safety of their pupils too. If you must use your car, please think about parking beyond the school boundaries such as the Co-op which is only a short walk away. By doing this and also complying as closely as possible with the timings this should ensure our site remains as safe as possible.



## Sickness reminder

During this pandemic, it is more important than ever that we keep as healthy as we possibly can. The school operates under guidance regarding pupil sickness absence, which is statutory and advised by county. In order to minimise the spread of infections of any kind it is advised that children who have suffered from sickness/ diarrhoea should remain off school for a minimum of 48 hours, even if they appear to be feeling a lot better. I am sure parents would appreciate that following this policy is in the interests of everyone who has contact with school and will support us in this matter. **Could I also remind parents that school needs to be informed of absence every morning that your child will not be attending, even if they are suffering from the same ailment. Please call the office rather than waiting for Mrs McCann to contact you as this takes up a lot of her valuable time which can be saved if you leave a simple message on the answerphone system.** This is part of the school's strong safeguarding systems which ensure that we can account for every child's whereabouts if they are not in school.

## Dates to the end of this term

November 23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>: Assessment Week

December 17<sup>th</sup>: Term ends **(Please note this is a Thursday)**

## Term dates for 2020/21

**Spring Term: Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021– Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 – Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

**Summer Term: Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021– Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021 – Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

## School website and Twitter

Our school website is designed not only to promote the school in the wider community and give information to parents who are selecting a school for their children, but also to provide information for you. Lots of you have signed up to Twitter and enjoy seeing the photographs and news about what is going on in school. This is updated almost daily by staff. Get yourself on there and have a look!!! It is also an excellent way of keeping up-to-date on school news which in these current times can change rapidly. We put links to important documents and letters on Twitter that you can access easily. You can find us at: **[www.winchelsea.lincs.sch.uk](http://www.winchelsea.lincs.sch.uk)** and on Twitter at **Helen Duckett @Winchelsea1**. Once you follow me you will access the Twitter details for all other staff too.

Despite this difficult situation nationally we are keeping spirits up and still smiling! Who knows what the future may hold and there is an awful lot of uncertainty for everyone but one thing I am sure of is that Winchelsea school will rise to whatever challenges we need to face and will always endeavour to do our best for everyone we work with.

Once again, I hope the information in this newsletter has been helpful.

Miss Helen Duckett

Head Teacher